

# A Study on James Joyce's "A Painful Case"

Noriko Higuchi

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

"A Painful Case" is the ninth of fifteen short stories in the *Dubliners*. Joyce defined it along with "The Clay" and "Counterparts," as a story of mature life in a letter to his brother, Stanislaus, on September 24, 1905 (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 77-78). The first draft written in July, 1905, was titled "A Painful Incident," and later it was repeatedly revised (Gifford 81). Joyce was twenty-three years old then. One year had already passed since he left Ireland with his wife, Nora, and took up residence on the continent.

This story is regarded by many critics as one of the most important and successful stories in *Dubliners* (Magalaner 95). C. H. Peake mentions that in structure and theme, "A Painful Case" is one of the most significant stories in the collection (35). Warren Beck admires it by calling it the "most moving and most profound" (29). However, Joyce himself considered it as one of the two weakest stories in *Dubliners* (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 229). He apparently seemed to be dissatisfied with it. We haven't gotten any clear answers to the question of why he thought it to be the weakest, but we can say that the protagonist, Mr. Duffy, represents the future image of what Joyce himself might have been had he not have willfully exiled himself from Ireland. While Joyce was writing this story, he became the father of his first child, Giorgio. It was the best year of his life in a sense. He must have tasted fully the joy of freedom and happiness on the continent at the time. The conviction of fatherhood which was based on his great happiness let him create the lonely Duffy who "had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed" (D 121) and "lived his spiritual life without any communion with

others" in Ireland (D 121). Duffy avoids "religion, family ties, love, friendship, marriage, politics, art and the rest—he avoids, as well as, life itself" (Peake 36). In short, Mr. Duffy is in contrast to Joyce in the situation at the time; but on the other hand, in case that he should decide not to leave but remain in Ireland, he is Joyce himself. Possibly, he is a foreboding image of a future Joyce and represents his dark and negative side as his name indicates. The name, "Duffy," comes from an Irish root, "dub or duff," and means "dark, black, dusk" (Gifford 81). This should be one of the reasons why Joyce regarded "A Painful Case" as the weakest story. He regretted that he had described too plainly the negative aspect of his character, his "meanness" or "ego." On the other hand, many critics admired this story because of Joyce's great techniques in his description of the impotence of love, a spiritual paralysis which is common to modern men.

## CHAPTER II

### JOYCE'S MESSAGE IN *DUBLINERS*

Joyce was born into a Catholic family, grew up in Catholic society, and was expected to be a priest by his family and their local priests. The priest and director of his school says to his alter ego, Stephen Dedalus, that "Perhaps you are the boy in this college whom God designs to call to Himself" (Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 143). The priesthood was just something which he had considered as his vocation from boyhood. He confesses that he has often seen himself "as a priest wielding calmly and humbly the awful power of which angels and saint stood in reverence" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 143). Nevertheless, he refuses to devote himself to God as a priest and "when the moment had come for him to obey the call he had turned aside" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 150-151). Then, the boy declares that "he was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 148). This spiritual awakening leads him to determine that "he would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable" as an artist (Joyce,

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*A Portrait* 154). This is his farewell address to the Catholic church and Irish society to which he had belonged for along time. Actually, Joyce described his feeling and thought to them in his letter to Nora Barnacle which is dated on August 29, 1904. It was two months before they left Dublin. They settled in Zurich and later moved to some other cities on the continent, but they never returned to Ireland to live again.

Six years ago I left the Catholic Church, hating it most fervently. I found it impossible for me to remain in it on account of the impulses of my nature. I made secret war upon it when I was a student and declined to accept the positions it offered me. By doing this I made myself a beggar but I retained my pride. Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do. I cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond. I started to study medicine three times, law once, music once. A week ago I was arranging to go away as a travelling actor. I could put no energy into the plan because you kept pulling me by the elbow. The actual difficulties of my life are incredible but I despise them. (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 25-26)

Ireland was politically ruled by England and religiously by the Roman Catholic Church in those days. People were especially under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. This means that anyone who did not follow its doctrine would be rejected in that country. In this situation, Joyce was disgusted with the limitation which the Roman Catholic Church made in any field. It was a matter of course he should be a self-exile when he decided to write anything he might choose freely and openly as an artist.

Actually, Joyce "left the Catholic Church, hating it most fervently;" however, it does not mean that he abandoned his faith. This is reflected in his sentiment toward Ireland in his speech, "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages," which he delivered in Trieste, in 1907. He explained the reason why he became a self-exile in it; "No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar as though from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angered Jove" (Joyce, *Critical Writings*

171). He explained that Ireland was a country which aroused God's anger. So he decided to escape from there just as Lot and his family did from Sodom and Gomorrah. It was necessary for him to do it to fulfill his own mission. We can see his vision and also his ideal image toward the artist in *Stephen Hero*.

The artist, he imagined, stands in the position of mediator between the world of his experience and the world of his dreams— a mediator consequently gifted with twin faculties, a selective faculty and a reproductive faculty. To equate these faculties was the secret of artistic success.... (82)

Joyce considered that the artist should be a mediator between the world of his experience and his dreams, with is to say, a mediator between this world and another world. This means the work of mediator is the same as that of priest. We can say that he has his own mission to "artishood." He shows it very clearly in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. He mentions that he decided to be "a priest of the eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 200). Consequently, "his choice was to be the artist, the priest of eternal imagination" (Jones 116). In this situation, Joyce wrote *Dubliners* as a priest-like artist or as an artist with the power of the priest of God to fulfill his mission.

Joyce's brother, Stanislaus Joyce, said about *Dubliners* that "the stories in *Dubliners* were not chosen haphazardly; there is an underlying plan in the book" (Joyce, Stanislaus 526). Joyce felt that it was his mission to write it as an artist, as his brother mentioned. Then, what did he want to tell the Irish in it? His mission is described in his two letters to a publisher, Grant Richard, in London. One is dated on October 15th, 1905 and the other is May 5th, 1906.

I do not think that any writer has yet presented Dublin to the world. It has been a capital of Europe for thousands of years, it is supposed to be the second city of the British Empire and it is nearly three times as big as Venice. Moreover, on account of

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many circumstances which I cannot detail here, the expression "Dubliner" seems to me to have some meaning and I doubt whether the same can be said for such words as "Londoner" and "Parisian" both of which have been used by writers as titles. From time to time I see in publishers' list announcements of books on Irish subjects, so that I think people might be willing to pay for the special odour of corruption which, I hope, floats over my stories. (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 78-79)

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories arranged in this order. I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do any more than this. I cannot alter what I have written. (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 83)

He dared to select Dublin which seemed to him "the center of paralysis" with "special odour of corruption" to describe "the moral history of his country" "in a style of scrupulous meanness." It is clear that he had negative feelings and thoughts about Dublin itself and Dubliners themselves. This is also shown in his critical writings in which he charged that "the soul of the country was weakened by centuries of useless struggle and broken treaties; and individual initiative is paralysed by the influence and admonitions of the church" (Joyce, *Critical Writings* 171) while Ireland itself "hounded its spiritual creators into exile only to boast about them" (Joyce, *Critical Writings* 212-213).

Joyce severely criticized the Irish and Ireland in this way. However, he apparently loved them at the bottom of his heart and was anxious about their future because he persisted in choosing them as his subject as long as he lived. All his work testifies of this. Of special note is the fact that *Dubliners* is the first message to the completely paralyzed

people who live in the corrupt city. He seemed to write it with his earnest prayer that they might recognize the true picture of their condition and identify themselves as God's creatures. It is important for us to notice that Joyce wanted to fulfill his dual function as artist and priest. This is shown in that he gave a special definition to the word, "epiphany," as a literary term. It is one of his main themes in his work. He mentions the meaning of it in *Stephen Hero*.

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phrase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments. (216)

It means that "an intuitive and sudden insight into the reality and basic meaning of an event; the term also refers to a literary work, or part of a work, that symbolically presents such a moment of perception and revelation" (Shaw 139). In addition to this definition, epiphany is a very important word in Christianity. In Christian terms it defines that manifestation of Christ to man which strongly relates to baptism (Schaff 744). Both manifestation of Christ to man and baptism are very significant words in Christianity. The former has the meaning of meeting Jesus Christ personally and accepting Him as our personal Saviour, and the latter the confession of our spiritual rebirth in faith and the identification of ourselves as God's creatures. Consequently, we should notice that Joyce always considered his writing as a mission as holy as the priesthood.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "A PAINFUL CASE" IN *DUBLINERS*

Corrington mentions that

In terms of ideas and themes, 'A Painful Case' very nearly

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equals 'The Dead' as a kind of synthesizing and focussing medium which, while adding its own dimension to the collection, at the same time serves to sharpen our apprehension of all that Joyce has been patiently moving toward in *Dubliners*. (182)

When they try to analyze "A Painful Case," some critics refer to "The Dead," the last story of *Dubliners*, and compare these two stories. They find the common points of the two in the theme, background, character of protagonists, and so on.

First of all, "The Dead" contrasts with "A Painful Case" in the theme. "The Dead" is the only story which was added to *Dubliners* later; so it does not fit with the four aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life, which Joyce classified when he wrote the collection. Actually, it is very different from other stories of *Dubliners* in the length as it is "roughly twice as long as the longest of its predecessors and about eight times as long as some of them" (Peake 45). In the theme, it is obviously considered to be the epilogue which summarizes and concludes the major themes of *Dubliners* (Walton Liz 53) and in which, for the first time, Joyce mentions the human soul's salvation from the state of paralysis through the experiences of the protagonist, Gabriel Conroy. In the preceding fourteen stories, Joyce never writes about people who are allowed to have the experience of their salvation from a paralyzed spirit. That is to say, Gabriel can be finally saved through his epiphany, his spiritual awakening that his wife Gretta's soul has been so strongly tied with her deceased lover Michael Fury and he himself has been totally ignorant of it and that he has been so foolishly self-centered in thinking himself as his wife's sole love partner. On the other hand, Duffy cannot be blessed with this salvation, although in the end he perceives how great the existence of the dead, "his soul's companion," Emily Sinico was for him. He feels a deep sense of isolation, thus concludes that he is an "outcast from life's feast." In other words, this is the time for him to identify himself, but it is too late because Emily Sinico, who can purify his spirit, is not there any more. There is no possibility for Duffy to be saved. In a sense, this is the first time Joyce has put a protagonist into such a severe situation. Actually,

in other stories of *Dubliners*, Joyce reserves some possibility for each protagonist to be saved, even if it is slight. But it is very clear that such a thing will not happen to Duffy because he is already "outcast from life's feast" (D 130) and at the last scene he has disregarded what the "goods train" (D 131) appeals to him which is the symbol of a vehicle to lead him to his salvation. "No one wanted him" (D 130). This last scene reminds us of the last judgement. Duffy symbolizes a man who was left behind, while some other human beings were admitted into the Kingdom. Shortly, Joyce wrote about "a most painful case" of man.

Secondly, there are some similarities between Gabriel and Duffy in their background and character. Both of them are from the educated class. Gabriel is a college teacher in his middle thirties. And Duffy is a cashier of a private bank in Baggot Street in his middle forties and has enough intelligence to translate Hauptmann's *Michael Kramer*, to write on his autobiography from time to time, and to assimilate the literary works by Wordsworth and Nietzsche. Both of them were probably born in Dublin and grew up in a Catholic society. Hugh points out that "it is precisely this fiction of Self-containment that Joyce defines in successively more elaborate images from Mr. Duffy's careful control over every detail of life through the tightly-bounded ethical world of Exiles" (Kenner 59). In short, both of them live in "the tightly-bounded ethical world of Exiles" as does Joyce.

As for their characters, they are very conservative and self-respectful. Furthermore, they have prejudice and discrimination against uneducated people, and they apparently draw a line between themselves and other ordinary people. They are self-centered in a sense, but they are neither against the law of Ireland nor the Maynooth Catechism. That is to say, they are apparently model citizens in politics and moral in those days.

However, there are some different points between them. Judging from the place where they live, Gabriel belongs to the upper middle class and Duffy to the middle or lower middle class. Dublin is generally divided into two parts, the North and the South which is delineated by the Liffey River that flows through the middle of the city. The place where people live indicates their living status, that is, the north side of Dublin is where the lower classes live and the south side is where the



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middle classes live. Going further down to the south apart from Dublin you find the residential section where the upper classes live. Gabriel lives in Monkstown which is located further down to the south, and on the other hand, Duffy lives in Chapelizod which is in the north side of the River Riffy. Gabriel has his family whom he loves very much and Duffy has been single.

One of the biggest differences between them is that Gabriel is described as an amiable person, in contrast to Duffy who has "neither companions nor friends" (D 121). This was caused by Joyce's change in his state of mind toward his native country at the time when he wrote "The Dead" after finishing his other fourteen stories of *Dubliners*. He describes Gabriel as an Irishman who respects "the tradition of genuine warm-hearted courteous Irish hospitality" (D 232). We can find his idea concerning the equating of Irish hospitality with virtue in his letter to his brother, Stanislaus on September 25, 1906. (Ellmann, *Selected Letters* 109-110) It was just before he completed "The Dead." Joyce describes Gabriel as a man who is not isolated from his society but keeps a relationship with others; he has both companions and friends. To the contrary, Duffy denies his contacts with others. Moreover, Gabriel at least tries to please others as he supports his aunts in their holding a party at Epiphany Night every year. Therefore, Gabriel can be said to be less selfish than Duffy is. This causes quite a difference in each of the two protagonists' destinies: salvation and destruction. And these are the most important final destinies for anyone.

Thirdly, there is another reason why the two stories are regarded as the most significant in *Dubliners*. It is because Joyce uses his key word, "swoon" in both stories. The word swoon is his favorite word (Ellmann, *James Joyce* 132) and includes a special meaning in his work. Generally speaking, it means "to faint" (OED 433); but whenever Joyce uses it, it is strongly connected with women who bring men to the Joycean epiphany. And in *Dubliners*, we can find the word only in "A Painful Case," and "The Dead." In "A Painful Case," the word is used to describe the expression of Emily Sinico's eyes when Duffy meets her at a concert for the first time. "The eyes were very dark blue and steady. Their gaze began with a defiant note but was confused by what seemed

a deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris, revealing for an instant a temperament of great sensibility" (D 121-122). In "The Dead," Joyce uses it at the end of the story to mention the condition of Gabriel's soul. He recognizes another world and accepts it in this scene. "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (D 256).

Probably the word swoon originally comes from his experience which is described in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Joyce writes as follows: "He closed his eyes in the languor of sleep. His eyelids trembled as if they felt the strange light of some new world. His soul was *swooning* into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings" (Joyce, *A Portrait* 157). This scene occurs right after Stephen saw a girl who is standing before him gazing out to sea. (Joyce, *Stephen Hero* 155)

Her image had passed into his soul forever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. (Joyce, *A Portrait* 156)

He realizes his mission: to "recreate life out of life" as an artist who is gifted with the power of a priest of God. When he recognizes it through the girl who symbolizes the Virgin Mary, he swoons and goes into some new world (Joyce, *A Portrait* 157). This is the experience of spiritual awakening, and conversion, which for him is the equivalent of Christian rebirth. In other words, this is the time for him to give his soul and spirit to the Virgin Mary to be purified just as he returns to the innocence and pureness through motherhood as a newborn baby. And he always needs to faint to be purified by her. We can say that the word swoon is a stage by which men can go into another world which is "the

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holy silence of his ecstasy," or to be born again. It symbolizes death and also life. At this moment, he is purified himself by the Virgin Mary and gives his life to Jesus Christ. His soul swoons slowly feeling "the holy silence of his ecstasy."

Yagyu mentions the similarity of this ecstasy and the Apostle Paul's ecstasy which he felt on the way to Damascus when he met the resurrected Jesus and heard his voice (Yagyu 220-221). Jesus called Paul's name and asked why he persecuted Him. The Bible says, "He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him" (RSV : Act 9 : 4). Paul fell down and "swooned" when he had this holy experience. After that, Paul was completely reformed and received the resurrected Jesus as his savior. He could recognize his own mission through this holy experience. So "to swoon" also symbolizes the deep emotional experience that often accompanies the surrendering of one's life to Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the word swoon is applied by Joyce at the crucial movement when the protagonists experience their spiritual awakening or rebirth, their salvation. Judging from this point of view, he writes "A Painful Case" and "The Dead" with his firm intention of getting the Irish awakened into the real salvation. It shows how significant a position both stories take in *Dubliners*, although the result is opposite; Gabriel is saved, while Duffy is not. The difference between them depends upon whether they are "acceptable" or not. Gabriel, who shares a number of Duffy's faults, is more amenable to experience than he" (Corrington 190). Compared with Duffy, Gabriel can recognize his selfishness through the judgement of three women: the caretaker's daughter Lily, the patriot Miss Ivors, and a model of womanhood, and his wife Gretta. The self-destruction which is brought by them leads him to his self-changing, and, at last, to his salvation through disclosure of his wife's love for her dead lover, Michael Fury.

However, Duffy is never saved even though he could meet Emily Sinico who plays such an important role in his chance at salvation as did Gretta in "The Dead." She could have made his life a totally changed one with her womanhood and motherhood, as he gradually opened his nature to her and she became his confessor "with almost maternal solicitude" (D 123). But he completely rejects her after she

shows "every sign of unusual excitement" (D 124) ; she "caught up his hand passionately and pressed it to her cheek" (D 124). His cruel and merciless treatment of her leads to her intemperate habit and finally to her death in the train accident. Had he had only a little thoughtfulness toward her, she would not have died. The real cause of her death is not by the accident but the lack of love from Duffy. She died in despair of her life. He is just a murderer. And it is too late when he realizes how important a part Emily played in his life. She was not in his world but in another world. Actually, Duffy is described as the more egocentric Gabriel who lives in the paralyzed city in "A Painful Case." This is one of the reasons why the two different results were brought about when Gabriel is saved and Duffy isn't.

#### CHAPTER IV THE CHARACTER OF THE PROTAGONIST, DUFFY

Joyce regards "A Painful Case" as one of the two weakest stories in *Dubliners* although many critics consider it to be a very successful one. According to his evaluation, he seems not to be satisfied with it, but there are only a few critics who have discussed why he considered it so. Among them, Kershner dares to point out that it is "because it does contain the materials that might produce either tragedy or melodrama" (110). In my point of view, however, it is not because Joyce could not focus on one dramatic element, either tragedy or melodrama, but because he was dissatisfied with the way of presenting Duffy's consciousness and his description of Duffy.

Joyce uses many epigrammatic expressions to disclose Duffy's creed in life. For example, "we cannot give ourselves... : we are our own" (D 124), "every bond is a bond to sorrow" (D 124), "love between man and man is impossible because there must not be sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse" (D 125). These represent Duffy's beliefs which he has chosen as his guide to life. Probably, Joyce here intends to give us a very clear image of Duffy. However, it is too direct a method to use these sentences in the story. They should be hinted by

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Duffy's attitude and the description about him. In short, he thought that this story had some problems in descriptive techniques. That is why he was not fond of this story.

Next, the other reason for Joyce's dissatisfaction—much more possible than the first—is that he projected too much of his own image in his description of Duffy. In fact, there is a strong likeness between them. Through our reading of several biographical books on Joyce and his autobiographical works such as *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*, we can recognize with ease that Duffy is Joyce himself. This means Joyce overly exposed the negative and sinful part of himself in Duffy's characterization. This is hinted in the name of the protagonist, James Duffy. The first name "James" is same as Joyce's and the last name "Duffy" means "dark," "black," and "dusk" (Gifford 81).

Joyce describes Duffy as too "egocentric," "self-centered" and "saturnine" in "A Painful Case." He lives "his spiritual life" (D 121), which is characterized as "pretentious," (D 119) although he does not notice it. He dislikes "anything which betokens physical and mental disorder" (D 120) and so his life "rolls out evenly" (D 121); an "adventureless" (D 121) one. He lives "at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful sidglances" (D 120). This shows his distrust of any human being and he does not even trust himself. He is given the image of a man who does not expect anything remarkable will happen to him which might reshuffle his accustomed way of life. He always builds "lofty walls" (D 119) in his mind to keep people at a distance which is also suggested in his arrangement of the furniture in his room. He is an "unamiable" person.

However, he believes that he is a model citizen whom no one can blame for what he does, because he does daily his duty as a citizen. He works regularly, performs "two social duties for old dignity's sake" (D 121), lives "his spiritual life" (D 121), and dislikes "physical and mental disorder" (D 120). He is neither against the law of Ireland nor the Maynooth Catechism. However, he quits the meetings of Irish Socialist groups when they become too intimate and he proposes to "break off their intercourse" (D 124) when Emily Sinico caught up his hand passionately and pressed it to her cheek" (D 124).

In spite of the deeds in his daily life which he regards as "sinless," he is just a sinner before God. He is too merciless to "give alms to beggars" (D 120). He is heartless so that he could not feel sympathy for Emily Sinico who is "dismissed so sincerely from husband's gallery of pleasure" (D 122). He is so arrogant that he despises "Dublin's gilded youth" (D 120), the "hard-featured realists of an Irish Social Party" (D 123), and the "working-men" (D 129) in the public-house in Chapelized Bridge. He is also very thoughtless so that he immediately judges Emily Sinico as "one of the wreck" (D 129) who is "unfit to live." (D 129) He is too selfish to recognize that he is to blame for her death. It is an irony peculiar to Joyce that the newspaper article reporting the death of Mrs. Sinico in the newspaper begins with "A Painful Case" and ends with "No blame attached to anyone." Duffy is so self-centered that he can declare that "we cannot give ourselves, ... we are our own." (D 124) All these words, "merciless," "heartless," "arrogant," "thoughtless," "selfish," and "self-centered" are those which express Duffy's attitudes against the law of God. This is the reason why "he had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed" (D 121), and "he lived his spiritual life without any communion with others" (D 121). He believes that "every bond is a bond to sorrow" (D 124). He does not trust any relationship with others. Not only that, he does not admit even his own existence. He always treats himself as a third person and never involves himself in anything. His heart is as cold as ice because he is "the living dead." The sinfulness in his case is that he does not notice it at all.

Even in such a case as Duffy, fortunately, the chance of salvation comes. He meets Emily Sinico at a concert in the Rotunda. She gives him a sign letting him know by "a deliberate swoon of the pupil" (D 121) that she is the Virgin Mary for him who can purify and lead him into salvation. After meeting her several times, "she became his confessor" (D 123). "With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his nature open to the full" (D 123). She is motherhood itself for him and also the Virgin Mary. This means that she is the only woman that can purify him. However, he is too egocentric and self-centered to realize how important is the part she undertakes for him in his life. He believes that he "entangled his thoughts with hers" (D 123), and "would ascend

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to an angelical stature in her eyes" (D 124). His sin is the pride in his belief that he is superior to any other person in any situation. This means that he tries to raise himself up to the position of a priest, even God. This misunderstanding leads to "a most painful case" for him; he is indeed emotionally dead and spiritually dead.

At the end of "A Painful Case," Duffy feels "his moral nature falling to pieces" (D 130). This indicates the moment of his "self-destruction" and "self-changing." But it is too late. He is described as a man who is not only outcast from life's feast but also has failed in catching the chance of salvation, symbolized by the goods train coming towards him at the last scene. This scene also symbolizes the Day of Judgement which will divide all people into either the blessed or the damned. Therefore, Duffy represents a man who is left behind in this world. The Bible says that "then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left" (RSV : Matt. 24 : 40), "where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 8 : 12, 13 : 42, 50, 22 : 13, 24 : 51, 25 : 30 ; Luke 13 : 28). It is too late even if he would regret his decision. Consequently, the last scene of this story tells the reader what his fortune would be in case he does not recognize his sin.

Duffy mirrors the future's image of Joyce himself just in case that he had not decided to leave Ireland with Nora and become a "self-exile." James Duffy is the possible figure of James Joyce if he had stayed in Ireland forever, without marrying. The circumstance around his house and the atmosphere in Duffy's room make us think of an abbey a "sombre house" (D 119), "the lofty walls of his uncarpeted room" (D 119) without pictures, the black and white furniture, and so on. He does his daily chores every day and lives an "adventureless" (D 121) life like a priest and monk without faith. Apparently, he has neither a strong desire nor the will to live passionately. However, he does not have such emotion in the bottom of his heart, which is symbolized by the black and "scarlet" rug covering the foot of his bed. He suppresses any demonstration of emotion as if he were not a living human being, but "the living dead."

When Joyce was writing this story, he became father of his first born child, Giorgio. West and Hendricks mention that "he was surprised and pleased to find himself moved by this event, though his letter

generally did a tolerable job of concealing so conventional an emotion (705). It was the happiest time for Joyce in his life. So he thought about the opposite situation which might befall him in the future, the negative image of himself mirrored in Duffy. Had he happened to become "the living dead" like Duffy, he would have had to follow his life just as the latter who "would be lonely too until he, too died, ceased to exist, became a memory—if anyone remembered him" (D 130). "No one wants him" (D 131).

West and Hendricks also say that "it confirmed him in the belief that children were a hedge against mortality" (705). The "mortality" is the main theme in "A Painful Case." We may say that Joyce was lost in thought about the theme on mortality, immortality, and salvation at this time through the experience of fatherhood. Furthermore, the existence of Duffy in his mind let him reconsider his mission as the artist connected with priest. As West and Hendricks mentioned before, Joyce seemed to dislike to express his emotion directly so that he wanted to ignore this story in which he overly characterized about his Duffy. However, in spite of his low evaluation of the story, so many critics admire it as it imprints his Duffy so vividly in every heart. As a matter of fact, it arouses great sympathy from many people. It also reminds us of the Last Judgement.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In "A Painful Case," Joyce vividly describes the most painful case of a man who is emotionally and spiritually dead, that he is truly "the living dead." Duffy believed he was not a sinner. The Bible reads, "if you are blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains" (John 9 : 41). He has never asked himself about the fact that he is ignorant of himself. This is a tragedy of one who has a paralyzed soul, and spiritual paralysis is the name of the case which is applied to the disease from which Duffy suffers.

*Dubliners* is widely read and admired not merely for its literary



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qualities but for its contemporary relevance.... Joyce's subject is the city and her people, and his great ingenuity as an artist is dedicated to the task of making that scene reflect timeless and universal motifs in human experience. (Baker iii)

His greatness lies in making us recognize our "Duffy," our ego, and urging us to ask ourselves whether we are really the "living human beings" or merely the living dead regardless of the times, countries, and culture. Duffy, of course, is the living dead. At the last scene he seems to be intent on catching the syllables of the name, Emily Sinico, reiterated by the creeping and droning engine of the locomotive and imprint them in his memory. He seems even to seek for her figure in the dark. However, he stops up his eyes and ears after all.

Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out of Kingsbridge Station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through the darkness, obstinately and laboriously. It passed slowly out of sight; but still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the engine reiterating the syllables of her name.

He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine pounding in his ears. he began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm to die away. He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone. (D 131)

Thus, he shuns the last chance to gain his humanity and have the human relationships with others which he has missed in his relations with Mrs. Sinico. This rigidity of his conduct must be habitual, and it could be diagnosed as a sort of symptom or case of a disease, "a painful case," and what Joyce denotes as paralysis. Therefore, he needs "Bile Beans" (D 120) which is "a patent medicine for bilious (embittered) conditions" (Gifford 84) and indicates "the need for medical treatment of melancholy, his black bile" (Wright 173). It was believed that the excess

of black bile caused a melancholic nature. (OED 756) The title of this story shows not "a painful case" because of Mrs. Sinico's accident but for Duffy's undermining disease. His soul and spirit have already been affected by it. He is, as it were, a serious case so that he needs not only "Bile Beans" but also Mrs. Sinico's love although he rejected it simply for the reason that he has not noticed that he needs it. Additionally, he did not know how serious his disease was then. This is also "a painful case" for him.

The third "painful case" for Duffy is that he did not recognize his heart's passion. The locomotive engine of the goods train is the symbol of passion (a worm with a fiery head) which was bestowed upon Mrs. Sinico, and it is also the symbol of salvation for Mr. Duffy. The name of Sinico makes us think of sin (Juan 160). Therefore, he misunderstood that he would become corrupted by her sin. However, her name is only for letting him realize his sin. Since he was too selfish, he could not notice it at all. So he has missed the train of salvation and will not catch it any more. One (Mrs. Sinico) was taken and, the other (Mr. Duffy) is left behind. Consequently, this is Joyce's message to let us know that it is too late even were we to notice that we are the "living dead" at the Last Judgement. We can say that Joyce sufficiently and successfully fulfilled his dual function of artishood and priesthood in "A Painful Case."

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